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Culture of peace

Letter dated 10 August 2005 from the Permanent Representatives of Indonesia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Interfaith Dialogue, which was held in Bali, Indonesia, on 21 and 22 July 2005, concluded with the Bali Declaration on Building Interfaith Harmony Within the International Community (see annex). As co-hosts of the said conference, Indonesia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have the honour to request the issuance of the attached conference outcome as a United Nations document under item 45 of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Rezlan Ishar **Jenie**
Permanent Representative of Indonesia

(*Signed*) Sir Emyr **Jones Parry**
Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom
of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

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Annex to the letter dated 10 August 2005 from the Permanent Representatives of Indonesia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

BALI DECLARATION ON BUILDING INTERFAITH HARMONY WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

We, the representatives of ASEM members, reflecting various cultural, religious and faith heritages, who gathered here at the ASEM Interfaith Dialogue in Bali, Indonesia, on 21-22 July 2005;

Expressing sympathy to the victims of the attacks in London on 7 July 2005 and to the victims of earlier such attacks, notably that in Bali on 17 October 2002;

Bearing in mind our determination to fulfill our responsibility to contribute to global efforts in promoting culture of peace and a total rejection of using violence in the name of religion not only within our communities but also the peoples of the world;

Reaffirming the importance of all peoples to hold, develop and preserve their faiths and religions within safeguarded religious freedom in a national and international atmosphere of peace, of tolerance as well as of mutual understanding and respect;

Recognizing the wisdom of the various existing faiths and religions in the efforts of maintaining peace and stability within the international community and people;

Acknowledging the valuable contributions of various initiatives at the national, regional and international level, such as the United Nations Initiatives on the Alliance of Civilization and Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation to promote the culture of peace;

Having thoroughly examined and discussed the common values of the various faiths and religions as well as barriers to building interfaith harmony within the international community and people;

Declare our profound conviction that:

1. **The various faiths and religions existing in the ASEM member countries are advocating peace, compassion, and tolerance among mankind;**

2. **The promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedom including the right of individual to choose religion or faith can contribute to upholding respect for the diversity of faiths and religions which is essential in combating ideologies based on extremism, intolerance, hatred, and the use of violence;**

3. **It is more important than ever for people of different religions and faiths to stand united and make it clear that they will not allow use of violence to divide them. We must all speak up against those who use religion to rationalize terrorism and murder;**

4. **Peace, justice, compassion, and tolerance need to be cultivated and nurtured to help create an environment conducive to building harmony within the international community and people;**

We, therefore, resolve to:

a. **Continuously bring the importance of promoting interfaith dialogue to the attention of our Governments and communities;**

b. **Translate the shared values of peace, compassion, and tolerance into practical actions within our communities by:**

i. **In the field of Education**

- **Encouraging Governments of ASEM to incorporate interfaith studies in curricula at the post-elementary level to promote understanding and respect for the various faiths and religions, giving due consideration to the specific circumstances of the respective countries;**

- **Encouraging research through seminars/workshops and other activities to define educational curricula that promote and strengthen interfaith dialogue;**

- **Strengthening cooperation on enhancing the capacity of human resources, among others, through exchanges of students, teachers and youth;**

- **Educating society to accept and deal with diversity and to prevent the emergence of extremism and prejudice through activities at the grassroots, national and regional levels;**

- **Preventing the marginalization of religion-based education institutions by integrating them into national education systems and goals;**

- **Publicizing the proceedings of the ASEM Bali Interfaith Dialogue as widely as possible and in particular, in the ASEM Infoboard and other relevant educational websites;**

- Encouraging ASEM to promote cooperation with appropriate international organizations in the field of education.

ii. In the field of Culture

- Acknowledging the linkages between religions and cultures, and promoting shared values that will strengthen harmony and understanding in society;

- Promoting exchanges to develop better understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultures, religions and faiths at all levels in Asia and Europe;

- Promoting cross cultural awareness and understanding at all levels of society particularly among the young;

iii. In the field of Media

- Strengthening and encouraging freedom of expression as the cornerstone of the participation of the media in promoting interfaith harmony.

- Ensuring the upholding of ethics in journalism in reporting interfaith issues as well as conscious distinction between news reports and commentaries.

- Upholding media professionalism and social responsibility by overcoming tendencies towards negativism and avoiding news labeling which lead to stereotyping religion and believers.

- Encouraging religious/community groups to be more proactive in engaging the media to promote balanced coverage as a means of fostering greater understanding of religions and cultures.

- Urging the media to provide more time and space to cover issues and developments relating to intra-faith and interfaith dialogue and cooperation in order to promote participation, in particular at the grassroots level, and to create a platforms for intra-faith and interfaith dialogue and cooperation.

- **Promoting exchange programs and scholarships to create networks among media personnel in Asia and Europe to exchange best practice and generate a greater pool of resources by involving media organizations, religious communities as well as governments.**

iv. **In the field of Religion and Society**

- **Defining and promoting common values such as the respect for human rights and the protection of environment;**
- **Combating corruption in all its forms;**
- **Encouraging and supporting the establishment of mechanisms within respective religious communities to strengthen ethical behavior and commonly shared moral values;**
- **Making use of the already existing interfaith organizations and institutions;**
- **Acknowledging and respecting the differences within and among the religions and faiths;**
- **Strengthening the education of faith, both within the own religion and the others in order to enable interfaith dialogue;**
- **Facilitating social convergence;**
- **Promoting gender equality and recognizing the role of women in peace-building and interfaith dialogue;**
- **Safeguarding religious rights and freedom through legislation;**
- **Accepting the role of religions and faiths as societal partners;**
- **Assisting each other (Religion/Societies) in their common tasks.**

We welcome the Indonesian initiative to establish an International Center for Religious and Cultural Cooperation (the Jogja Center) and encourage this and other similar initiative in other countries.

We congratulate the Government of Indonesia for initiating this Interfaith Dialogue and the excellent arrangement of this important event. We are especially honored by the presence of the President of Indonesia, His Excellency Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, giving grace to our deliberation. We thank the Government of the United Kingdom for co-hosting this Dialogue. We also express our appreciation to all the co-sponsors which have made this Dialogue possible, namely: Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, Greece, Malaysia, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Singapore, Spain, and Thailand, as well as the valuable contribution made by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). We welcome the offer of Cyprus to host the second ASEM Interfaith Dialogue in 2006.

Bali, Indonesia, 22 July 2005